



Domestic Violence

Fact Sheet- #2, 2000

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"You cannot emerge a whole human being when you escape someone who constantly beats you physically, emotionally and spiritually... until that searing of the soul has been attended to.... There is something which happens to the psyche. The wholeness of the individual must be looked at.... They must begin to understand what has happened to them, and why."

-Survivor of Domestic Violence

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and/or coercive behaviors that adults or adolescents use against their current or former intimate partners. It occurs in intimate relationships where the perpetrator and the victim are currently or previously have been dating, living together, married or divorced. They might have children in common, or not.

National Facts

- According to the U.S. Department of Justice, **85 percent** of the victims of domestic violence are women. Men are responsible for the vast majority of these attacks.
- Slightly more than half of female victims of intimate violence live in households with children under the age of 12.
- Domestic violence acts occur in great numbers. For example, each year from 1992 to 1996 there were more than **960,000** victimizations of women by an intimate.
- Murders of intimate partners and former intimate partners account for about **9 percent** of all murders nationwide.
- The last decade averaged about **1,300 murders** of women attributable to intimates and former intimates per year.
- **Forty percent** of all women between the ages of 30 and 49 who were murdered between 1976 and 1996, were killed by a current or former husband or boyfriend.
- Nationally, the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that only about **half** of the incidents of intimate partner violence experienced by women are reported to the police.

Missouri Facts

- There are currently **76 domestic violence shelters** or support programs or non-residential support programs in **46 of Missouri's 114 counties**.
- Member programs of the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence provides more than **167,000 bednights** of shelter annually to battered women and their children.
- Missouri domestic violence shelters **turned away more than 5,000 women and children** in 1998 because those shelters were full.

Women represent 85% of victims of domestic violence

Behaviors & Attitudes of Abusers

There is no way to spot a batterer in a crowd. It is not a question of class, race, age, religion or socioeconomic status. Domestic violence is a gender issue. Most batterers are male. Research has indicated that batterers often share these behaviors and attitudes:

Intimidation & Violence	Minimizes Abuse
Substance Abuse	Lives in Isolation
Breaks or Strikes Things in Anger	History of Violence
History of Violence	Extreme Jealousy
Cruelty to Animals or Children	Controlling Behavior
Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde Syndrome	Projects Blame
Verbally Abusive	Poor Impulse Control
Rape or Use of Force in Sex	

The LIFE Process of Assisting Battered Women

Listening, informing and education can lead to empowerment for a battered woman when the **LIFE** process of assistance is used. Through this process, victims gain knowledge, and knowledge is power. This is a process that happens in degrees, but it does happen.

LISTEN

- Provide a physically and emotionally safe place for a battered woman to talk and tell her story and allow sufficient time for her to become comfortable and able to discuss the details of her abuse.
- Begin with her story, history, concerns and questions. Validate her experience and what she is saying. Clarify anything you, or she, does not understand.
- Identify her hopes and fears and the resources she is currently using or might need and help her create a personalized safety plan

INFORM

- Explore her circumstances and discuss the worst- and best-case scenarios as they relate to each of the remedies available to her.

FACILITATE

- Help her to critically assess her chosen course of action (including her safety plan) and to understand the likely consequences.
- Name specific times and dates for ongoing contacts or follow-up.

EMPOWER AND ASSIST HER

- Educate a battered woman so she can advocate for herself, thereby taking control of her life and making it safer for herself and her children.

Fact Sheets are reports presented by the Missouri Women's Council on the national and statewide status of women and families.
Missouri Women's Council Mission: *Missouri's prosperity grows as women become stronger economic, civic, and family leaders.*

Sources Cited: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998. Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data of Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends. Special Thanks to the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

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